

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In light of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested.

The instant After-Final Amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application and does not require a further search. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the instant Amendment be entered.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-40 are pending in this application. In the Office Action, claims 31-36 have been rejected and claims 37-40 have been objected to. In this response, claims 31 and 37 have been amended and claim 36 has been canceled without prejudice to its subsequent prosecution in any continuing application or disclaimer of the proprietary rights set forth therein. No new matter has been added as a result of the amendments to the claims.

It is submitted that these claims are patentably distinct from the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims are in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. The remarks made herein are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§ 101, 102, 103 or 112, but rather the amendments and remarks made herein are simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Initially, the Examiner is thanked for indicating that claims 1-30 are allowed and that claims 37-40 contain allowable subject matter.

II. THE REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

In the Office Action, claims 31-36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,514,386 to Watanabe ("Watanabe"). The rejections are traversed for at least the following reasons.

As amended, claim 31 of the instant application recites, *inter alia*, that the papermakers' press fabric comprises a layer having a plurality of land areas oriented substantially in the machine direction and a plurality of groove areas oriented substantially in the machine direction. In contrast, as depicted in Figure 1, the papermaking felt in Watanabe comprises a film layer 5 having elongate ridges 4 in the cross machine (CD) direction. Col. 3, lines 55-67. In referring to Figure 6 of Watanabe, the Office Action further states that the film layer 5 can be made up of rectangular grooves and lands, each lying in a plane parallel to one another. Therefore, the Action is equating the elongate ridges 4 of Watanabe to the land and groove areas of the instant invention. Moreover, the Office Action states that the elongate ridges 4 of Watanabe are oriented in the cross machine direction.

Consequently, since the elongate ridges of the film layer in Watanabe are oriented in the cross machine direction and revised claim 31 of the instant invention requires that the land and groove areas be oriented substantially in the machine direction, it is respectfully submitted that revised claim 31 patentably distinguishes over Watanabe and is therefore allowable. Further, claims 32-35 and 37-40, which depend from claim 31, are allowable therewith.

Statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited references represent the present opinions of the Applicant's undersigned attorney and, in the event that the Examiner disagrees with any such opinions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the respective reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

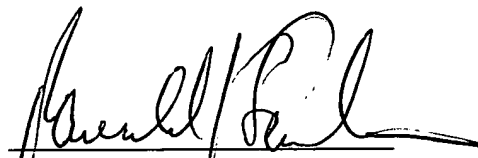
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that the instant claims should be allowed and that the instant application is now in condition for allowance. Applicant further submits that this

After-Final Amendment does not require an additional search. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests entry of this After-Final Amendment and favorable reconsideration of the application, withdrawal of the rejections, and prompt issuance of the Notice of Allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
FROMMER LAWRENCE & HAUG LLP

By:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ronald R. Santucci', written over a horizontal line.

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